DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 192 461 EA 012 962

AUTHOR Kettle, Helen
TITLE A Documentation of the Activities and Functioning of the School Consultative Committees in Vancouver Schools. Research Report 80-03.
INSTITUTION Vancouver Board of School Trustees (British Columbia). Dept. of Evaluation and Research.
PUB DATE Mar 80
NOTE 56p.: Some pages may not reproduce clearly due to broken print of original document.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role: *Advisory Committees: Decision Making: Elementary Secondary Education: Group Dynamics: *Parent Participation: Parent Role: *Parent School Relationship: Policy Formation: Questionnaires: School Policy
IDENTIFIERS *Vancouver Board of School Trustees BC

ABSTRACT

In 1975 the Vancouver, British Columbia, Board of School Trustees established School Consultative Committees (SCCs). These advisory committees were designed to allow parents to participate in the decision-making process at the local school level. An analysis of the minutes of meetings of twelve of these SCCs (eight elementary and four secondary) during the 1979-1980 school year and of responses of committee members to questions regarding the role and aims of SCCs provided information on exactly what SCCs do once they are well established and what difficulties they face. Members felt the SCC role was primarily advisory, but the minutes indicated that SCCs received information, dealt with requests, and participated in discussions while only rarely making advisory suggestions or recommendations. The principal's role in establishing and maintaining the SCC was shown to be very important, while readiness of parents to participate was identified as a major problem. Suggestions were made for encouraging participation, particularly among parents for whom English was a second language. This report includes as appendixes summaries of SCC members' responses to the specific questions asked during interviews. (Author/PGD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED192461

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

A DOCUMENTATION OF THE ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONING OF THE SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES IN VANCOUVER SCHOOLS

Helen Kettle

Research Report 80-03

March, 1980

Evaluation and Research Services
Program Resources
Board of School Trustees
1595 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V6J 1Z8

EA 012 562

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. MacDonald

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	i
ABSTRACT	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	1
The Establishment of the School Consultative Committees	1
Guidelines for School Consultative Committees	1
DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY	1
PURPOSE	1
SAMPLE	2
PROCEDURES	2
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	2
FINDINGS	3
I. WHAT DO SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES DO?	3
Information from Committee Minutes	3
Opinions of Committee Members Regarding the Role and Aims of the Committee	6
II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES SURVEYED	9
"Successful" and "Less Successful" School Consultative Committees	9
Three Case Studies	10
Case Study One	10
Case Study Two	12
Case Study Three	12
III. ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE	13
The Role of the Principal	13
The Role of the Chairperson	15
Difficulties	16
IV. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE S.C.C.	17
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	19
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A - SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS' RESPONSES	21
APPENDIX B - SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS' RESPONSES - D. CUPIT	35
APPENDIX C - GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES	42

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
I.	FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY THE SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES - BY SCHOOL LEVEL	4
II.	FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY THE SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES - BY DEGREE OF SUCCESS OF COMMITTEE	7

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to acknowledge the assistance of Sue Hunter, Cynthia Patterson and Bob Stevens for their help with the collection and compilation of information for this study, and would like also to thank Chuck Gosbee and Sue Murphy for the information and assistance they provided.

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to provide information pertinent to two questions:

1. What do School Consultative Committees do?

2. What can be done to assist in the functioning of the S.C.C.'s?

An analysis of the minutes of meetings and responses of committee members to questions concerning the role and aims of the S.C.C. provided information relevant to the first question. Information relevant to the second question was provided by an analysis of the role of the principal, the role of the chairperson, difficulties encountered in setting up the S.C.C. and suggestions made by Committee members for ways of improving the effectiveness of the S.C.C.'s.

Members' responses to a question about the role of the S.C.C. in decision-making revealed that they felt the role was primarily advisory. The analysis of minutes revealed that although some S.C.C.'s did advise on certain topics, for the most part the S.C.C.'s played a rather passive role--they frequently received information, dealt with requests and participated in discussions--but less frequently presented suggestions or made recommendations. The responses to questions about the aims revealed that committee members consistently mentioned only one clear-cut aim--to share information with parents about the school.

Information regarding the role of the principal, the role of the chairperson and difficulties encountered in setting up the S.C.C. revealed that:

1. The principal plays a crucial role in establishing the S.C.C.

2. Both the principal and chairperson play an important role in maintaining the vitality of the group once it is established.

3. The readiness of parents to participate in the S.C.C. was identified as a major problem. This was particularly apparent in schools located in lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods with a high proportion of parents who speak English as a second language.

Suggestions of ways to improve the effectiveness of the S.C.C. included suggestions for encouraging parent participation in general and suggestions pertaining to parents who speak English as a second language. Suggested ways in which the V.S.B. could help the S.C.C.'s become more effective were listed.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Establishment of the School Consultative Committees

In 1974, a Parent Liaison Committee, representing Vancouver parent groups, was established to consider future plans for parental involvement in school decision-making. In August, 1975, after receiving input from the Parent Liaison Committee and on the recommendation of officials, the Vancouver School Board voted to establish School Consultative Committees. Representatives from school-parent groups were invited to meet with trustees in October, 1975, to discuss School Consultative Committees (S.C.C.'s). Since that time, S.C.C.'s have been established in most Vancouver schools.

Guidelines for the School Consultative Committees

The S.C.C.'s are intended to provide a local, school-based forum for parents to become involved in school affairs. With this philosophy in mind, guidelines were drawn up outlining the functions that S.C.C.'s might perform. The guidelines indicated that S.C.C.'s might provide an opportunity for parents to:

- make suggestions with regard to individual school programs,
- make recommendations to the principal regarding changes in school policy or procedure,
- assist in evaluating programs and procedures in the school,
- recommend alterations and renovations,
- review curriculum,
- cooperate in establishing programs for parents,
- assist in establishing program priorities, and
- become involved in the development of educational and organizational programs.

In addition to listing possible functions that S.C.C.'s might fulfil, the guidelines included suggestions concerning the establishment of the Committees, their size, membership requirements and policies. Also included was an outline of the responsibilities of the Vancouver School Board to the S.C.C.'s.[1]

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

PURPOSE

The Vancouver School Board and officials requested that a study be done to update the information obtained from a 1977 survey of the S.C.C.'s,

---

1. A copy of the guidelines for School Consultative Committees is included as Appendix C.

.....2

school administrators and school staffs.[2] Instead of simply replicating the previous study, however, the decision was made to provide a description of the activities performed by the S.C.C.'s so that others might view the appropriateness of the activities in terms of the intended functions. In addition, the study would identify effective modes of operation and sources of difficulty in order to delineate ways the S.C.C.'s could be assisted in their functioning. This study was therefore undertaken to provide information pertinent to two questions:

1. What do School Consultative Committees do?

2. What can be done to assist in the functioning of the S.C.C.'s?

SAMPLE

Twelve S.C.C.'s were included in the sample, eight at the elementary level and four at the secondary level. Half of the elementary and half of the secondary S.C.C.'s were chosen randomly from a list of committees known to be performing some of the functions described in the guidelines for School Consultative Committees. Two schools which have encountered difficulty in establishing an S.C.C. were asked to be involved and the other four S.C.C.'s were selected randomly from the remaining schools, i.e., those not on the list mentioned above.

Concurrent with the planning of this study, Mr. Don Cupit, Principal, David Oppenheimer Elementary School, was planning a research project on S.C.C.'s as a part of his Master's thesis. Mr. Cupit agreed to make the information he collected available to the writer and was assisted in selecting and contacting schools. Consequently, information is available (included in Appendix B) from an additional five schools selected randomly from the list of schools known to be performing some of the functions described in the guidelines for School Consultative Committees.

PROCEDURES

The researchers examined S.C.C. minutes and materials accumulated from September, 1979, and attended meetings in January and February to observe and record the content of activities performed and the roles of key participants. Interviews were held with the Principal or Vice-Principal, Chairperson and other key participants in each school to clarify information.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since the findings of this study are drawn from a small sample of schools and are therefore not generalizable to all Vancouver schools, the reader should exercise caution in interpreting them. The study was designed to provide some insights into the functions performed by S.C.C.'s and their modes of operation rather than to provide a critical appraisal of S.C.C.'s or information on their operation throughout the school system.

---

2. Allan, M.C., *Evaluation of School Consultative Committees*, Research Report 77-02, July, 1977.

FINDINGS

I. WHAT DO SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES DO?

Information From Committee Minutes

The data for this section of the report were compiled from an analysis of minutes and meeting notes. Each topic recorded in the minutes was listed and categorized as shown in Table 1. A topic that occurred frequently in the minutes, such as the treasurer's report or discussions that continued over several meetings, was recorded only once. Thus each topic was entered as a unit whether the topic was a brief mention of a school project, an informative program that provided the focus of a meeting or the ongoing planning of a major event (e.g., fund-raising activity) that was spread over several meetings. A glance at Table 1 gives an indication of the types of topics most frequently discussed and therefore reveals the kinds of functions performed by the S.C.C.'s. In order of frequency, they are:

1. receiving information about school activities, programs and curriculum, e.g., a brief announcement about an upcoming sports event or a detailed presentation by a staff member on a school program.

2. "housekeeping" tasks, e.g., discussing meeting times, procedures, disbursements, agendas, and electing officers.

3. dealing with requests from other school-related organizations, i.e., the V.S.B., the Coordinating Council and other School Consultative Committees.

4. receiving information about new programs or events affecting the educational program in the school, e.g., an experimental corrective reading program in the local school or district-wide policies on student assessment.

5. participating in informative programs or discussions sponsored by community agencies.

6. organizing fund-raising activities.

7. discussing or recommending changes in school policy or procedures.

8. discussing measures to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the neighbourhood.

9. discussing other topics of general concern to parents.

10. discussing ways of increasing parent involvement in the S.C.C.

TABLE 1: AN ANALYSIS OF S.C.C. MEETINGS IN TERMS OF TYPES OF TOPICS DISCUSSED OR FUNCTIONS PERFORMED AND THEIR FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE -- BY SCHOOL LEVEL

TYPES OF TOPICS DISCUSSED/FUNCTIONS PERFORMED	*FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE*				
	Elementary Schools *n=8*		Secondary Schools *n=4*		
	Total	Average per School	Total	Average per School	*GRAND TOTAL*
Became more informed about/discussed school activities, programs, curriculum, etc.	44	5.5	29	7.3	73
Discussed meeting times, procedures, disbursements, topics for future meetings, etc., elected officers	22	2.8	7	1.8	29
Responded to requests from/discussed activities initiated by school-related organizations--the V.S.B., the Coordinating Council and other School Consultative Committees	11	1.4	7	1.8	18
Requested information/was informed regarding new programs or events affecting the educational program in the school	12	1.5	5	1.3	17
Became more informed about/participated in discussions sponsored by outside agencies (i.e., Park Board, Police Department, Ministry of Human Resources)	7	.9	4	1.0	11
Organized/discussed fund-raising activities	7	.9	4	1.0	11
Recommended/discussed changes that are perceived to be desirable in respect to school policy or procedures	8	1.0	0	0	8
Discussed/made recommendations/was informed regarding measures to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the neighbourhood	8	1.0	0	0	8
Discussed ways of increasing parent involvement in the S.C.C./the school	6	.8	1	.3	7
Requested information regarding/discussed a topic/established a program of general concern to parents	5	.6	1	.3	6
Recommended/discussed physical alterations, renovations, playground construction, etc.	3	.4	0	0	3
Brought forward parental enquiries about processes and procedures affecting children	1	.1	2	.5	3

TABLE 1 CONT'D

TYPES OF TOPICS DISCUSSED/FUNCTIONS PERFORMED	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE: Elementary Schools n=8 Total	Elementary Schools n=8 Average per School	Secondary Schools n=4 Total	Secondary Schools n=4 Average per School	GRAND TOTAL
Assisted in planning/planned means of communication with parents, e.g., Newsletter	3	.4	0	0	3
Discussed issues relating to staffing	3	.4	0	0	3
Discussed V.S.B. guidelines for S.C.C.'s	2	.3	1	.3	3
Discussed criteria for selecting a principal	2	.1	1	.3	3
Assisted in establishing programs for parents through which they may become informed of the developments within the school	1	.1	2	.1	3
Presented suggestions in respect to learning experiences for which the school is responsible	2	.3	0	0	2
Discussed/was informed regarding school philosophy/educational priorities	1	.1	1	.3	2
Made suggestions regarding curriculum	1	.1	0	0	1
Discussed/planned programs to promote racial and cultural understanding within the school neighbourhood	1	.1	0	0	1
Assisted in evaluating school program, activities, curriculum/ provided information for accreditation	1	.1	0	0	1

The committees infrequently performed such duties outlined in the guidelines as discussing criteria for selecting a principal, establishing informative programs for parents, presenting suggestions in respect to learning experiences, developing a school philosophy, reviewing the curriculum or developing programs to encourage racial and cultural understanding within a school community.[3] There were no instances of committees performing some of the functions outlined in the guidelines such as assisting in evaluating innovative programs and procedures, advising on adult activities at the school, recommending a code of student conduct or assisting in establishing program priorities.

Although the overall pattern is similar for elementary and secondary schools, a comparison of the two types of schools which takes into account the proportion of schools represented (see Table 1, Average per School columns), reveals that the secondary school committees were more frequently involved in becoming aware of school activities and responding to requests initiated by school-related organizations and were less frequently involved in most other types of activities. They were not at all involved in recommending or discussing changes in school policy, safety measures for children, physical alterations, learning experiences for children, staffing, curriculum, programs to promote cultural understanding, or evaluating the school program.

Opinions of Committee Members Regarding the Role and Aims of the Committee

Further information relevant to the question of what S.C.C.'s do is provided by the responses of Committee members to the questions about the role of the S.C.C. in decision-making and the committee's aims.

When asked what role the S.C.C. played in decision-making, most committee members responded that it played primarily an advisory and information receiving role. Many added that they felt decision-making was the proper role of the principal and staff but that they would like to provide input to the process. In some schools the S.C.C. was also involved in fund-raising and members viewed this function as an important way of providing financial assistance to the school for projects that would not otherwise be possible. In addition to the functions mentioned above, the S.C.C. in several schools acted as an organizing or coordinating committee for activities involving other school committees.[4]

When asked what the aims of the committee were, many members said that sharing information about the school with parents was an aim. This was the only consistent response. Other responses were: to gain greater understanding of the V.S.B. and the Ministry of Education, to support school staff, to review the S.C.C. guidelines, to monitor parent involvement in the school, to raise funds, to discuss issues of concern to the school and to make parents feel a part of the educational process. In three schools, the S.C.C. was not sufficiently organized to have any clear-cut aims.

---

3. With respect to this function, it should be noted that, while few instances of this occurred during the period of time covered by the study, many of the committees had, in past years, been involved in activities such as an International Food Fair designed to bring together members of the various ethnic groups in the community for an evening of mutual exchange and socializing.

4. See Appendix A, Question 12, p. 28.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES SURVEYED

Perhaps the most salient feature of the School Consultative Committees surveyed is the diversity of styles and functions represented. The 12 committees surveyed can be roughly classified as being "successful" or "less successful"; however, within these broad classifications there are considerable differences in the manner in which the groups operate and the functions they perform. The following section describes both the differences between the broader classifications outlined and the variety of modes of operation within these classifications.

"Successful" and "Less Successful" School Consultative Committees

The sample of S.C.C.'s selected for the study included six S.C.C.'s considered to be "successful" and two considered to be "less successful". There was no information about the successfulness of the other four which were selected entirely at random.[5] Once the data were collected, however, it became evident that three of the four random groups were not very well established. They were therefore classified as "less successful".

The "successful" School Consultative Committees surveyed generally had the following features:

- an active membership of between 15 - 30 parents
- an established group (e.g., the P.T.A.) present before the S.C.C. was formed
- a stable core of members who return from year to year
- regular meetings--usually once a month--held on dates set in advance or following a regular schedule (e.g., second Wednesday of every month)
- an informal meeting style but with a set agenda drawn up in advance by the chairperson in consultation with the principal
- minutes are kept and are distributed to committee members or read to the committee at the next meeting (sometimes minutes are also distributed to other schools, the area office or to other interested community groups)
- meetings are well advertised, often by a combination of a notice in the school newsletter or a special notice of the meeting and a phone call to members

The "less successful" committees were less active than the "successful" committees. This is reflected in a smaller parent membership, fewer staff or student members, and fewer meetings. The "less successful" committees usually did not have an established group from which to draw members when the S.C.C. was formed and had less stability of membership from year to year.

A comparison of the functions performed by "successful" and "less successful" committees is shown in Table II. A glance at the table reveals that the "less successful" committees were less frequently informed about school activities, programs, curriculum and new programs or events affecting the educational programs in the school. In contrast to the "successful" committees who occasionally discussed or made suggestions concerning school policy, physical alterations, learning experiences for children in the classroom, staffing, school philosophy, curriculum and evaluation of school programs, the "less successful" committees did not discuss or make suggestions concerning these aspects of the school.

---

5. For a complete description of the selection of schools for the study, see the section titled Sample, p. 2.

TABLE II: AN ANALYSIS OF S.C.C. MEETINGS IN TERMS OF TYPES OF TOPICS DISCUSSED OR FUNCTIONS PERFORMED AND THEIR FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE -- BY DEGREE OF SUCCESS OF COMMITTEE

TYPES OF TOPICS DISCUSSED/FUNCTIONS PERFORMED	*FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE*				
	"Successful" Committees *n=7*		"Less Successful" Committees *n=5*		
	Total	Average per School	Total	Average per School	*GRAND TOTAL*
Became more informed about/discussed school activities, programs, curriculum, etc.	56	8.0	17	3.4	73
Discussed meeting times, procedures, disbursements, topics for future meetings, etc., elected officers	19	2.7	10	2.0	29
Responded to requests from/discussed activities initiated by school-related organizations--the V.S.B., the Coordinating Council and other School Consultative Committees	16	2.3	2	.4	18
Requested information/was informed regarding new programs or events affecting the educational program in the school	14	2.0	3	.6	17
Became more informed about/participated in discussions sponsored by outside agencies (i.e., Park Board, Police Department, Ministry of Human Resources)	8	1.1	3	.6	11
Organized/discussed fund-raising activities	10	1.4	1	.2	11
Recommended/discussed changes that are perceived to be desirable in respect to school policy or procedures	8	1.1	0	0	8
Discussed/made recommendations/was informed regarding measures to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the neighbourhood	7	1.0	1	.2	8
Discussed ways of increasing parent involvement in the S.C.C./the school	5	.7	2	.4	7

TABLE II CONT'D

TYPES OF TOPICS DISCUSSED/FUNCTIONS PERFORMED	*FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE* "Successful" Committees *n=7* Total	"Successful" Committees *n=7* Average per School	"Less Successful" Committees *n=5* Total	"Less Successful" Committees *n=5* Average per School	*GRAND TOTAL*
Requested information regarding/discussed a topic/established a program of general concern to parents	5	.7	1	.4	6
Recommended/discussed physical alterations, renovations, playground construction, etc.	3	.4	0	0	3
Brought forward parental enquiries about processes and procedures affecting children	2	.4	0	0	3
Assisted in planning/planned means of communication with parents, e.g., Newsletter	3	.4	0	0	3
Discussed issues relating to staffing	3	.4	0	0	3
Discussed V.S.B. guidelines for S.C.C.'s	1	.1	2	.4	3
Discussed criteria for selecting a principal	2	.3	1	.2	3
Assisted in establishing programs for parents through which they may become informed of the developments within the school	2	.4	2	0	3
Presented suggestions in respect to learning experiences for which the school is responsible	2	.4	0	0	2
Discussed/was informed regarding school philosophy/educational priorities	2	.3	0	0	2
Made suggestions regarding curriculum	1	.1	0	0	1
Discussed/planned programs to promote racial and cultural understanding within the school neighbourhood	1	.1	0	0	1
Assisted in evaluating school program, activities, curriculum/ provided information for accreditation	1	.1	0	0	1

Three Case Studies

The following section describes three of the School Consultative Committees surveyed. They were chosen as illustrative of the wide variety of styles encountered during the study. Two of the committees described were classified as "successful" and one was "less successful".

Case Study One

The school is a large elementary (K-7) school located in an affluent middle class neighbourhood. There are 29 elected and appointed members on the committee which includes 25 parents, four staff members and two students. The committee is made up of five executive members and representatives from seven subcommittees.

The subcommittees are as follows:

1. Class Parents - Each class has one parent who assists the teacher by organizing volunteer work done by other parents--such as tutoring children, driving for field trips, making teaching materials and acting as resource people.

2. Block Home Safety Program - Three parents act as coordinators of this program which has been organized to ensure that pupils have a safe place to go should they get into difficulty.

3. Developmental Physical Education - The parents who assist in this program provide Kindergarten pupils with practice and experience in a wide variety of physical activities twice a week.

4. Learning Assistance Centre - About 20 parents work as tutors in the L.A.C. Working under the direction of the Centre teacher, they provide pupils with individual assistance in Arithmetic and Language Arts.

5. Parents' Discussion Group - This group meets monthly to discuss topics of interest to parents. Topics are generated by those who attend and usually focus on some aspect of education that is of vital concern in the local school.

6. Members-at-Large - Eight to ten parents are elected each year to act as members-at-large. It is from this group that the treasurer and secretary are usually elected and members-at-large often serve on ad hoc committees. They provide informed reaction to school programs and policies and help the committee to be aware of parental concerns and expectations.

7. Administration/Teacher/Counsellor Representation - The principal, vice-principal, a teacher representative and the school counsellor are also members of the committee.

The main functions of the committee as outlined in the School Handbook are as follows:

1. To organize and oversee the various volunteer activities of parents within the school.
2. To discuss matters that affect the functioning of the school.
3. To become involved in the development of programs that will enhance the learning opportunities of both children and parents.

The committee meets every six weeks to hear reports from the various subcommittee chairpersons, to discuss matters related to activities within the school and to make suggestions for improving existing programs or introducing new ones. The meetings, which are open to all parents, are usually well attended. Meetings are conducted on an informal basis; decisions are usually reached by consensus. An opportunity is provided for parents not on the executive to ask questions about the school and its operation.

It is obvious that this amount of activity requires a large number of parents willing and able to devote time and energy to the school. Other factors in the success of this group are as follows:

1. A well-established parent group existed at the time the S.C.C. was organized.
2. There is a highly stable membership from year to year, including considerable stability in the executive positions.
3. New members start out as members-at-large and thus have an opportunity to learn about the workings of the various committees before taking on an executive role.
4. An informal system of soliciting new members is carried on throughout the year. Parents are invited to volunteer in various school activities and subsequently often become interested in the committee.
5. An extensive system of communications between the school and parents exists which includes biweekly newsletters, notices of meetings, distribution of minutes, the School Handbook and an informal network of communications between the school administration, S.C.C. executive and parents.
6. A clear-cut role has been outlined for the S.C.C.
7. Members feel that their opinions are listened to and can influence decision-making.
8. There is a high degree of unanimity in the group regarding the aims of the committee.
9. The principal supports a philosophy designed "to make the school and family a working team" and encourages a policy of open communication. By involving more people in the school, these goals have a strong positive effect on the S.C.C.

Case Study Two

The school is a large elementary (K-7) school located in a working-class neighbourhood. Approximately 66 percent of the students come from homes in which English is a second language and 15 to 20 percent come from single-parent homes.

There was no active parent committee in the school at the time the S.C.C.'s were formally established; however, following a request made at Meet the Teacher night a group of parents volunteered to form a group. For the first two years the principal and the vice-principal more or less carried the group due to problems in finding a suitable chairperson. The group finally got going, however, when several parents emerged with leadership skills and a willingness to become involved.

The group currently has a core of 10 to 12 parents who attend the monthly meetings. Members view their role as advisory, fund-raising and as a communication link between the school and the parents. Some members feel that the committee should have input into what the school teaches but not how it is taught. Meetings are conducted informally with formal votes taken when a major issue is being decided.

The committee becomes involved in a wide range of activities such as receiving reports on academic programs and school activities, organizing informative programs for parents, discussing the implementation of projects planned by the Neighbourhood Improvement Project, and organizing fund-raising activities.

A key factor in the success of the group is the principal's and vice-principal's dedication to the concept of parent involvement and their open communication approach. Also important is the determination and enthusiasm of the current chairperson and a core of parents who are willing to volunteer their services when needed.

Case Study Three

The school is a large secondary school located in a working-class neighbourhood with a high proportion of families whose native language is not English. A parent group had been established in the school for a number of years prior to the formation of the S.C.C. so that the S.C.C. was really just a continuation of the original group. There are currently about six to ten parents who meet once a month with the principal or the vice-principal. Membership is on a voluntary basis. Meeting dates are set in advance and follow a prearranged schedule. An informal agenda is drawn up by the principal or vice-principal before each meeting, and a notice of the meeting is included in the school newsletter. The meetings are very informal and if a decision is to be made it is arrived at by general consensus. Minutes are not kept. At the beginning of the year, members are asked to suggest topics for discussion. Meetings are planned around topics suggested by members or initiated by an outside agency and usually involve a presentation by a guest speaker. A discussion usually follows.

The members of the committee did not consider the group to be highly successful. Both the principal and the chairperson complained of poor attendance at meetings and a lack of commitment to any major undertakings. The group had not established clear-cut goals; consequently, the members settled for the relatively passive role of receiving information and discussing it. The principal was attempting to interest the group in taking a more active role, particularly in fund-raising. The group did not seem eager to take on the responsibility. The chairperson admitted that her commitment to the group was limited due to a heavy schedule of other activities and the fact that, after this school year, she would no longer have a student attending the school, so would be ineligible to participate. She had only reluctantly agreed to be chairperson as there was no one else willing to take on the task.

The principal felt that the lack of parent participation was due in part to the large ethnic population in the area who did not have the time nor see a need to become involved. He felt that many parents had the attitude that the administrators knew best what to do and were satisfied with the way the school was run.

III. ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Role of the Principal

When the decision was made in August, 1975, to establish School Consultative Committees, many of the schools surveyed already had a parent group, such as the P.T.A., operating. In most cases, the existing parents' group formed the nucleus of the School Consultative Committee. For some schools, especially secondary schools, the change was, in effect, really just a change in name. For other schools, the change was accompanied by efforts on the part of the principal to revitalize the group and encourage a change of focus in keeping with the new guidelines. In other schools, there was not a strongly active group in existence at the time the S.C.C. was established. In these schools, the principal had to work hard to establish an active group.

Having an established group present in the school at the time the S.C.C. was formed was mentioned as a factor in five of the seven "successful" groups. Undoubtedly, having an interested core of parents with which to work made the principal's job easier, but it also influenced the type of role the principal played. Some evidence for this was provided by the way in which the principal's role was viewed by principals themselves and by chairpersons in the "successful" and "less successful" committees.[6] For example, the principal was more often viewed as being a facilitator or a provider of information in "successful" groups, whereas he was more likely to be viewed as a leader in the "less successful" groups. This appeared to be because the principal played the crucial role of providing the stimulus to get the group going. Once the group was established, the principal's role changed and he tended to become more of a facilitator or resource person to the group.

---

6. See Appendix A, Question 1, p. 28, Question 4, p. 29.

When principals and chairpersons were asked to what they attributed the success in establishing an S.C.C., many of their responses related to the principal's role.[7] The following list, compiled from their responses, illustrates key factors in the principal's approach:

1. A positive attitude on the part of the principal/a sincere desire to have parents more involved in the group.
2. The principal's ability to encourage a positive attitude among staff re the S.C.C. concept and to obtain their support in involving parents in the school.
3. Encouraging parents to become involved in, or more aware of, school activities by helping out as volunteers, viewing students' work or observing classes in session.
4. Providing parents with a rationale that they can relate to for participation in the S.C.C., e.g., since parents know their children best they can contribute a great deal by working with the school for the betterment of the children.
5. Conveying the message to parents, especially parents in the ethnic communities, that the school wants to hear parents' opinions.
6. Establishing a clear idea among staff and parents as to the purpose and functioning of the S.C.C.
7. The principal's determination to establish a group and his willingness to carry the group, if necessary, until a parent willing and able to assume the role of chairperson emerges.
8. The principal's efforts to establish and maintain personal contact with the chairperson and other interested parents.
9. Efforts to provide topics of interest for discussion/attract parents to meetings by presenting concrete issues to which they can relate to.

In more established groups, the principal tended to be a facilitator and source of information rather than a leader. His role was described as follows: to make sure the group has accurate information, to assist in interpreting communications from the V.S.B., to answer questions, to keep the S.C.C. informed of events and needs in the school, to act as a liaison between the committee and the staff, and to assist in setting up special programs, obtaining speakers, etc.[8]

---

7. See Appendix A, Question 4, p. 22, Appendix B, Question 1, p. 35.

8. See Appendix A, Question 1, p. 28, Question 4, p. 29.

The principal also contributed to the successful operation of the group through his influence in the following ways:[9]

1. Making parents feel comfortable, welcome.
2. Meeting parents as equals, not talking down or talking jargon.
3. Inspiring respect and trust in parents by conveying a genuine concern for children and giving honest answers to questions.
4. Having an open communication policy in the school, encouraging staff to be available to answer questions, deal with problems.
5. Having a school philosophy which enhances a team approach to education, viewing the school and the family as a working team.
6. Encouraging and maintaining good communications between the home and the school, both formal, e.g., newsletters, notices, and informal, e.g., ongoing contacts between the principal and chairperson, staff and parents.
7. Setting a pleasant, informal atmosphere at meetings.
8. Helping the chairperson, if necessary, to see that meetings are properly organized, well run and interesting.

The Role of the Chairperson

As with the principal's role, the perceptions of the role of the chairperson differed according to the "successfulness" of the group. In highly "successful" groups, the chairperson was considered a leader whereas in "less successful" groups the chairperson was seen as a person who assisted in some way but did not actually lead the group.[10]

Chairpersons in "successful" committees performed some or all of the following functions:

1. Formed the agenda for meetings, usually in consultation with the principal.
2. Ran the meeting.
3. Brought issues raised by parents or from correspondence to the meetings.
4. Monitored and stimulated discussion/allowed various viewpoints to be heard.
5. Provided background information.
6. Were liaisons between parents and the principal.
7. Were liaisons between the S.C.C. and the V.S.B.
8. Represented the group at other functions, if necessary.

---

9. See Appendix A, Question 1, p. 32, Appendix B, Question 15, p. 40.
10. See Appendix A, Questions 2 and 3, p. 28.

The chairperson also played an important role in contributing to the success of the S.C.C. by:[11]

1. Controlling and directing meetings effectively, i.e., by keeping them short, keeping discussions on topic, ensuring that all members had a chance to speak.
2. Setting a pleasant, informal atmosphere.
3. Avoiding conflicts by anticipating sensitive issues, avoiding taking sides, keeping discussions from the personal level.
4. Maintaining effective communication with the principal and parents.
5. Being or finding a key organizer for projects.

Although the role of the principal and chairperson were undoubtedly of crucial importance to the success of the S.C.C., some other factors were mentioned which pertain to parents.[12]

1. It helps if parents are confident, know how to organize, know what their views are, have a commitment to the school, have an interest in children and are willing and able to take part.
2. It also helps if people in the group know each other well and have worked together in other activities.
3. A mix of parents of both sexes provides a balance in meetings.

Difficulties

Principals and chairpersons were asked to describe what difficulties were encountered in setting up or maintaining an S.C.C. Chief among the problems mentioned was getting parents to become involved.

The make-up of the community was seen as having an important influence on success in getting parents involved. In lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods with a high proportion of parents who spoke English as a second language, there were a number of factors which tended to work against the active participation of parents in the S.C.C. To gain further insights, the researcher met and discussed these problems with the Multicultural Home-School Workers.

The following is a summary of ideas garnered from the interviews with the S.C.C. members and from discussions with the Multicultural Workers.

In a lower socioeconomic neighbourhood, there is often a high proportion of single-parent families and families with both parents working. In both cases, parents may be reluctant to go out in the evening due to the obligation they feel to be at home with their children or because they cannot afford a babysitter. Long working hours and shift work may also be factors that prevent parents from participating. In the case of recent immigrants,

---

11. Appendix A, Question 1, p. 33, Appendix B, Question 15, p. 40.

12. Ibid.

the effort of adjusting to a new culture and providing the necessities of life for their families entails a large expenditure of energy leaving little over for involvement with the school.

Even when immigrants become a little better established, there are other factors that may prevent their participation. Parents may be reluctant to participate because of their poor English. They may feel shy and lack confidence in the presence of people who speak English well. Schools have tried to overcome this problem by using translators at important meetings but this is only a partial solution at best due to the amount of energy and patience required of the participants.

Cultural differences also affect participation. Parents bring with them to Canada a variety of attitudes toward education. Some parents feel that they should only go to the school to discuss their own childrens' progress. They do not feel that it is the parents' role to have a say in school matters or they simply do not want to have a say. Other parents are satisfied with the school system, feel that the school is doing a good job and see no reason to be involved. In some cases, perceived differences in values may be reflected in a reluctance to participate in school affairs.

Other factors that affect parents, in general, may play a role as well. For example, parents may feel that their voice will not be heard, or that their opinions are not really wanted. They may find nothing of interest to them at meetings or they may be satisfied with the school and see no need to be involved.[13]

Other difficulties encountered in setting up or maintaining an S.C.C. were mentioned by the principals and chairpersons. They included:[14]

- lack of a strong parent leader to take charge
- reluctance of parents to serve on the executive
- lack of experience of chairperson
- reluctance of parents to commit themselves to projects
- getting parents to initiate projects
- explaining the change from P.T.A. to S.C.C./changing the role of the group from fund-raising to advisory
- getting participation from the staff
- defining the role of the S.C.C.
- obtaining participation of the staff
- establishing a rationale for parent involvement
- avoiding cliques
- getting used to discussing sensitive issues
- disagreement over intended functions
- communicating effectively

IV. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE S.C.C.

The following is a list of suggestions, made by principals and chairpersons, of ways to overcome some of the difficulties and improve the effectiveness of the S.C.C.

---

13. Appendix A, Questions 5 (p. 22) and 1 (p. 31) and Appendix B, Questions 2 (p. 35) and 12a (p. 39).

14. Ibid.

To encourage parent participation in the school:

1. Ask for volunteers for assistance with specific tasks, e.g., helping on field trips.
2. Don't turn volunteers away when there are more than are needed for an activity, ask them to participate in another activity, name a specific date and time. (Note: It is important that staff feel comfortable with this. The principal can help the staff to appreciate the benefits of volunteer assistance.).
3. Invite parents to see childrens' work or to watch a class in session.
4. Have a coffee get together or wine and cheese party to break down formality and communication barriers.
5. Have members invite other members to S.C.C. meetings and/or keep them informed of activities.
6. Provide information of interest or importance to issues being discussed.
7. See that meetings are organized so that parents can think out an issue and prepare a response before discussing it. (One school tabled important issues to the next meeting, then extended an invitation to all parents to be involved in the discussion.)
8. See that the organizational structure of the S.C.C. allows for the effective use of parent energies. (One school found it useful to have two groups--a "thinking" group to discuss issues, raise matters of concern and a "working" group to provide volunteers for school activities and raise funds; another school had five groups each fulfilling a specific function in the school.[15]).
9. Set realistic goals for parents re the functions of the S.C.C., allow them to gradually become accustomed to the new role.

To encourage the participation of parents who speak English as a second language:[16]

1. Plan activities in which the whole family can participate or in which they can display their pride in their national heritage, e.g., a Fun Fair, an International Night.
2. Invite parents to be involved in the school in specific ways. (See suggestions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 above)
3. Invite parents of one ethnic group to school to meet one another, share concerns. (Multicultural Workers can assist.)
4. Invite parents, in general, to discuss topics/issues of interest to parents. (Multicultural Workers can provide suggestions re topics of interest.)

---

15. See description in *Case Study 1*, p. 10.

16. Some of these suggestions were made by the Multicultural Home - School Workers.

5. When parents do turn out at meetings, make a point of making them feel welcome, let them know that their views are wanted, that the school is there to serve them.
6. Discuss problems.(At one school, the language problem was discussed openly at a meeting and parents whose English was poor were encouraged to express themselves and felt more comfortable at subsequent meetings.)

Ways the V.S.B. can help:[17]

1. Hold workshops to help principals become more effective in dealing with S.C.C.'s.
2. Hold workshops to help chairpersons become more effective group leaders.
3. Continue the Information Forum.
4. Continue to provide materials such as the Goldmine Kit.
5. Provide information to new chairpersons at the beginning of the year.
6. Have more people available to provide a source of communication between the S.C.C.'s and the Board.
7. Increase the funds available to the S.C.C.'s for mailings, stationery, publication of newsletters, etc.
8. Allow latitude in the S.C.C. guidelines as what works at one school may not be appropriate at another.
9. Allow school administrators or staff members to be chairpersons.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken to provide information pertinent to two questions:

1. What do School Consultative Committees do?
2. What can be done to assist in the functioning of the S.C.C.'s?

An analysis of the minutes of meetings and responses of committee members to questions concerning the role and aims of the S.C.C. provided information relevant to the first question. Information relevant to the second question was provided by an analysis of the role of the principal, the role of the chairperson, difficulties encountered in setting up the S.C.C. and suggestions made by Committee members for ways of improving the effectiveness of the S.C.C.'s.

Members' responses to a question about the role of the S.C.C. in decision-making revealed that they felt the role was primarily advisory. The analysis of minutes revealed that although some S.C.C.'s did advise

---

17. These suggestions were made in response to a general question asking for suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the S.C.C. (see Appendix A, Question 2, p. 21). The suggestions listed were each made by only one or two people.

on certain topics, for the most part the S.C.C.'s played a rather passive role--they frequently received information, dealt with requests and participated in discussions--but less frequently presented suggestions or made recommendations. The responses to questions about the aims revealed that committee members consistently mentioned only one clear-cut aim--to share information with parents about the school.

Information regarding the role of the principal, the role of the chairperson and difficulties encountered in setting up the S.C.C. revealed that:

1. The principal plays a crucial role in establishing the S.C.C.
2. Both the principal and the chairperson play an important role in maintaining the vitality of the group once it is established.
3. The readiness of parents to participate in the S.C.C. was identified as a major problem. This was particularly apparent in schools located in lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods with a high proportion of parents who speak English as a second language.

Suggestions of ways to improve the effectiveness of the S.C.C. included suggestions for encouraging parent participation in general and suggestions pertaining to parents who speak English as a second language. Suggested ways in which the V.S.B. could help the S.C.C.'s become more effective were listed.

The School Consultative Committees surveyed represented a variety of styles of operation and different stages of development in fulfilling the functions outlined in the guidelines. For the most part, however, the Committees received information about the school and its activities, dealt with requests from other school-related organizations (the V.S.B., the Coordinating Council and other S.C.C.'s), participated in discussions sponsored by other community agencies and organized fund-raising activities.

The School Consultative Committees can perhaps best be assisted in their functioning through providing information and/or workshops to help principals and chairpersons improve their effectiveness in dealing with S.C.C.'s. Some consideration might also be given to other suggestions for ways the V.S.B. can provide assistance to the S.C.C.'s such as: continuing to provide informative events and materials for parents and S.C.C. members, providing communication links between the V.S.B. and the S.C.C.'s, increasing funds available to the S.C.C.'s, allowing latitude in the guidelines and allowing school administrators or staff members to be chairpersons.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS' RESPONSES

The following is a summary of the responses of principals, chairpersons and other key members of the School Consultative Committees who were interviewed in the twelve schools.

Background Information

1. When was the S.C.C. formed?

- steps were taken to establish an S.C.C. in all twelve schools during the 1975-76 school year

2. What steps were taken to establish the S.C.C.?

In schools in which there was no parents' group present at the time the S.C.C. was formed:

- principal asked parents at Meet the Teacher night to volunteer for committee (one school)
- representatives from each class were selected/asked to volunteer by teachers at Meet the Teacher night; these representatives formed the S.C.C. (one school)
- a newsletter was sent out to all parents describing the committee and the guidelines and inviting parents to a founding meeting; those who turned up formed the committee (one school)

In schools in which there was a parents' group present when the S.C.C. was formed:

- S.C.C. evolved out of the parents' group; was really just a change of name and focus for some groups (five schools)
- principal invited all parents and P.T.A. members to a meeting; explained S.C.C. role and why it was a good idea (one school)
- principal had volunteers from each class form the S.C.C. as a separate group; P.T.A. still flourishes as a social and fund-raising group even though many of its members no longer have students in the school (one school)
- no information was available for two schools

3. How successfully is the S.C.C. functioning?

- nine schools had an established group that met regularly (usually once a month)
- seven of the nine could be considered successful in terms of fulfilling a number of the intended functions, and operating in a satisfactory way in the view of key participants
- three schools had committees which met infrequently and had few committed members

4. *To what can the success in establishing the S.C.C. be attributed?*

- existing parents' group provided a core of interested, committed parents (five schools)
- a positive approach on the part of principal (three schools)
- sincere invitation, encouragement from the school for parents to take part (two schools)
- parents were given a rationale for participation they could relate to, e.g., parents knew most about their children and could work together with school for the betterment of the children, if parents don't get involved they shouldn't complain (two schools)
- principal new to school, probably traded on parents' curiosity about new principal (one school)
- determination on part of principal, kept asking parents to be involved (one school)
- willingness of principal to carry the group for several years continually working to convince parents that their advice was wanted and appreciated (one school)
- cooperation of teachers in selecting parent representatives/attracting new members (one school)
- principal and staff established a clear idea of the purpose and functioning of the S.C.C. (one school)
- a concrete issue (accreditation) got parents out to a large meeting, established interest and motivation for parents to participate (one school)
- a membership list was maintained and principal had a senior student or secretary phone parents to remind them of meetings (one school)

5. *What difficulties were encountered in setting up the S.C.C.?*

- low attendance at meetings (five schools)
- reluctance of people from ethnic communities to be involved (four schools)
- need to encourage people constantly (two schools)
- lack of a strong, parent leader to take charge (three schools)
- reluctance of parents to serve on executive (one school)
- no overwhelming school problems to stimulate involvement (one school)
- S.C.C. not fulfilling a "grass roots" need, initiated by V.S.B. (one school)
- principal and staff initially not clear as to purpose and function of S.C.C. (one school)
- explaining why the change from P.T.A. to S.C.C. (one school)
- parents' role not well-defined (one school)

6. *How were the difficulties overcome?*

- determination on the part of principal--principal made direct appeals to parents whom he felt might be interested (four schools)
- principal made it clear to ethnic members that the school was interested in hearing their point of view. Ethnic parents were reluctant to express their views due to poor English. This was discussed in the group to make people relax, feel more comfortable (one school)
- principal and staff became more aware of purpose and function of S.C.C. (one school)

6. *Cont'd*

- invitations to see their children's work brought parents into school--held a "coffee club"--parents of one class could come to school to watch class in session, gradually people were drawn into S.C.C. as they began to feel comfortable in school (one school)
- effort was made to make meetings interesting and different each time (one school)
- difficulties have not been overcome in five schools

7. (a) *How many members does the committee have?*

- varied from eight to 86 parents on membership lists
- varied from three to 30 regular attenders representing 30 to 90 percent of the membership

(b) *How many school staff are members?*

- usually two or three

(c) *Does your committee have student members?*

- two secondary schools and one elementary school had student members

8. (a) *How often does the committee meet?*

- monthly in most schools
- every six weeks in one school
- three to four times a year in three schools

(b) *What time of day does it meet? Where does it meet?*

- in the evening except for one committee that met in the morning
- meetings always held at the school

9. *Who is the chairperson of the committee?*

- the chairperson was a parent in all schools

10. *How was the chairperson selected?*

- the chairperson usually was nominated or volunteered and an informal election was held

11. *How were committee members selected?*

- committee members volunteered in all but one school where members were more formally elected or appointed

12. *If elections are held, when are they held?*

- elections were held in the Fall in nine schools and in the Spring in two schools; one school did not hold elections

13. *How long do members stay with the committee?*

- four schools had very stable memberships, five schools had moderately stable memberships, two schools had had a complete change in membership since last school year and one school had not established a membership beyond one or two people who could be called upon for assistance with specific tasks

14. *Who usually calls the meetings?*

- meeting dates followed a regular schedule mutually agreed upon by the principal and chairperson in six schools, were set at each meeting by general agreement in four schools, and the principal called the meetings in the remaining two schools

15. *Who prepares the agenda?*

- usually the principal and chairperson consulted regarding the agenda, members usually had input if they wished; in two schools the agenda was prepared by the principal or vice-principal alone

16. *What meeting style is used?*

- meetings were usually conducted informally, with decisions reached by general consent

17. (a) *What officers does the committee have?*

- two to five officers including various combinations of chairperson, vice-chairperson, past chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and social convenor

(b) *Does the executive meet between regular committee meetings?*

- in three committees the executive occasionally met between regular meetings
- in the others, the executive did not meet between regular meetings

18. (a) *Are minutes or summaries of meetings kept?*

- all but two committees kept minutes or summaries of meetings

(b) *If yes, to whom are minutes or summaries distributed?*

- minutes were usually distributed or read to committee members; occasionally they were also sent to the Area Offices, the V.S.B., interested parents, nearby schools or to community groups

19. (a) *Do all members have a role?*

- formal votes were rarely held but all members could have input into the decision-making process

(b) *Is a majority needed?*

- a majority was required when formal votes are taken

20. *Can the principal/vice-principal overrule the committee?*

- three principals said yes; the others said that no situation had arisen where the principal had to overrule the committee

Interaction Between the Committee and Other Groups

1. *Is there a parent group other than the S.C.C.?*

- there were parent groups other than the S.C.C. in five schools
- these were:
  - P.T.A.
  - a School Lunch Program run by parent volunteers
  - Band Parents
  - Success (a Chinese group)
  - Scholarship Committee, Music Society and Rugby Group

2. *Are there any problems as a result of having two parent groups?*

- no problems were reported; in some cases the groups worked together on fund-raising projects

3. *Are there any other community groups who wish to put forward a point of view?*

- in one school there were two groups:

  (a) Neighbourhood Learning Centre--organizes about 12 evening courses for adults with the help of a V.S.B. programmer
  (b) local Planning Committee--worked jointly with the S.C.C. to develop the school basement for the use of senior citizens

4. *Are committee meetings open to all parents/guardians?*

- yes, in all cases

5. *How does the Committee communicate with the parents/guardians in the school community?*

- usually by a combination of two or three of the following: notices of meetings, newsletters, distribution of minutes and telephone
- one school publishes a school handbook each year to inform parents of school activities

6. *Is it felt that the opinions expressed or aims pursued by the committee are representative of the feelings of the community as a whole?*

- in six schools, the members felt that the group was fairly representative of the community
- in the other six schools, the members felt that it was difficult to assess for various reasons, such as: not all ethnic groups are represented, parents tend to speak for themselves, the parents who came to the meeting tend to be more interested in education than other parents

7. *How is community opinion tapped?*

- when community opinion was tapped, it was usually through informal networks
- occasionally parent opinion on a particular issue or with regard to the school in general (e.g., for accreditation) was sought through a questionnaire

8. (a) *Is there difficulty in communicating with the parents in the community in English?*

- communicating with parents in English was a problem in nine schools

(b) *If yes, is language translation available at meetings? Do the newsletters, notices of meetings, etc., go out in other languages?*

- language translation was not usually available at meetings
- two schools had translators available for large parent meetings
- three schools send notices out in languages other than English occasionally

9. (a) *Has there been any communication between the committee and the V.S.B.?*

- all committees had received communications from the V.S.B., e.g., Board minutes, newsletters
- some committees had had various people from the V.S.B. out to give talks
- some committees had initiated contacts with the V.S.B. through letters, petitions, or direct contact with the local trustee

(b) *Has communication been satisfactory?*

- in general, communication was satisfactory

(c) *If not, how can it be improved?*

- V.S.B. decision-making should be more open to the public
- better timing, requests often come with too little time to deal with them
- more communication
- direct answers
- difficulty getting to the right department to get an answer

General Comments

- contacts from Mount Pleasant Information Forum were good--subsequently invited one of the coordinators to give a talk
- Goldmine Kit very good--could go to each new S.C.C. even without Information Forum
- was probably up to chairperson and principal to make contact, if necessary
- individual parents can write/phone V.S.B. if they want, principal would like to be asked first before parents take their questions to the Board

10. *Are members aware of the V.S.B. guidelines for S.C.C.'s?*

- the guidelines have been reviewed or mentioned in seven schools during this school year
- in the other five schools, the guidelines have not been mentioned this school year, but some members may be aware of them from previous years

11. *What do members feel is the role of the S.C.C. in terms of the educational decision-making process in the school?*

The following roles were described:

a. Advisory

- consultation, a sounding board
- principal asks for input
- providing input
- mildly consultative, not vocal and definite but certainly interested
- leave decision-making to teachers
- don't want to interfere in decision-making
- speak for the parents in the school
- give an opinion if asked
- opinions are considered, can make things happen if they wish

b. Information receiving

- inform parents about school programs, issues
- provide parents with information about the education of their children

c. Liaison/public relations

- a forum for parents to learn about the school and express their viewpoint

d. Fund-raising

- assist the principal in providing a good education by providing help

General Comments

- principal and parents not sure how S.C.C. fits into the school
- parents want to have their role clearly defined, members do not believe they can do what the guidelines say they can, e.g., influence the appointment of a principal
- parents want straight answers; if their advice is wanted, they want it to be dealt with seriously
- the S.C.C. should have a bigger say in what the school teaches; how the school teaches is up to the school

12. *What role does the committee actually play in the decision-making process?*

- the role played in most schools was primarily advisory and information receiving
- in four schools the S.C.C. also was involved in fund-raising
- in two schools the S.C.C. acted as an organizing or coordinating committee for activities involving other school committees in addition to fulfilling the advisory and information receiving roles
- in two schools the S.C.C. had not become sufficiently established to have a defined role

Group Interaction

1. *What does the principal/vice-principal feel is his role?*

- in "successful" committees, one principal felt his role was to lead; two felt their role was to lead, to facilitate and to provide information; two felt it was to facilitate and two felt it was to provide information
- in "less successful" committees, three principals felt their role was to lead and one felt it was to facilitate. There was no information for one committee

2. *What does the principal/vice-principal feel is the chairperson's role?*

- in "successful" committees, four principals felt the chairperson's role was to lead, one felt it was to be co-leader with the principal, one felt it was to lead, to facilitate and to provide information and one felt the chairperson played a minor role, i.e., represented the group at other functions if necessary and handled some correspondence
- in "less successful" committees, one principal described the chairperson's role as being a co-chairperson with the principal, one said the chairperson handled correspondence and played a minor role in meetings and the others indicated that the chairperson did not fulfil an established role

3. *What does the chairperson feel is his role?*

- in "successful" committees, three chairpersons felt their role was to lead or to organize; one felt his role was to lead and to facilitate; one felt his role was to lead, to facilitate and to provide information and one said that it was to look after correspondence, liaise between parents and the school and open and close meetings
- in "less successful" committees, one felt his role was to lead, one felt it was to receive correspondence and bring issues raised in correspondence to meetings and one felt it was to chair meetings. There was no information for one committee

4. *What does the chairperson feel is the principal's/vice-principal's role?*

- in "successful" committees, three chairpersons felt the principal's role was to facilitate and provide information, one felt it was to lead and to facilitate, one felt it was to advise and provide information, one felt it was to receive opinions and voice concerns and one felt it was to provide information
- in "less successful" committees, one chairperson felt the principal's role was to lead and to provide information, one felt it was to provide information and be a spokesperson for teachers and the V.S.B., one felt it was to facilitate. There was no information for one committee

5. (a) *Are the members in agreement regarding the committee's aims?*

- there was general agreement concerning aims in six committees
- it was felt in one committee that there were a few members who were interested in the committee having more power
- the question was inapplicable in the remaining committees because aims were not clearly established
- one chairperson said that parents dealt with issues as they came up, rather than having aims

(b) *If yes, what are the major aims?*

- the aims most frequently described were to receive information about school programs, to provide speakers for interest of parents and to support school programs through fund-raising
- other aims mentioned included: reviewing the guidelines for S.C.C.'s, acquiring a greater understanding of the V.S.B. and the Ministry of Education, promoting the S.C.C. as a means of parent involvement in the school and promoting particular issues relevant to the school
- this question was inapplicable in four schools as the groups were not sufficiently established to have clearly defined aims
- the chairperson in one school said that there was confusion over the role of the S.C.C. and the group was not really "pulled-together" enough to have any aims
- the chairperson in another school said that the members dealt with issues as they came up rather than having specific aims

6. *Do all members participate in putting forward ideas?*

- in eight schools there was generally good participation in making suggestions, contributing to discussions, etc.
- often it was a practice at the beginning of the year to invite members to suggest topics for informative programs, guest speakers, etc.
- in four schools, ideas mainly came from the principal and/or the chairperson

Successful Activities

1. *Was there an activity that was particularly successful? Why was it successful?*

The following activities were described:

a. Initiation of Drug Program

- chairperson was interested and pushed the idea
- there was no program for drug information in the school and parents were concerned about the problem in the area
- an information program for parents was organized--people from the Alcohol and Drug Commission gave a talk and showed a film
- the evening was well-attended by parents and the enthusiasm it generated provided a stimulus for the group to explore possibilities of extending the program

b. Building a Creative Playground*

- parents originated idea and teachers backed them up
- provided something school didn't have
- parents were very actively involved in planning, raising funds and building
- survey of local residents showed 95 percent support
- V.S.B. matched funds and drew up plans

c. Joint S.C.C. Meeting

- three schools agreed to hold a joint meeting and to invite the superintendent of schools to give a talk
- meeting was well-attended and S.C.C. members expressed satisfaction with the event

d. Meeting for Parents from Feeder Schools

- an evening was held for parents from the feeder schools to become more informed about the programs available at the secondary school
- the meeting was well-attended, discussion was interesting
- this type of meeting was requested by V.S.B. officials

e. Discussions re Criteria for a Principal

- principal informed group that he might be moved and suggested that the committee discuss it
- a subcommittee was set up with membership open to those who were interested
- subcommittee met and drafted a proposal
- a questionnaire went out with newsletter to all parents requesting that they write down their criteria for a principal
- draft document and completed surveys were discussed at a subsequent meeting
- proposed steps to complete project included meeting with a subcommittee of teachers for their input and presenting the completed document to the S.C.C. with the Superintendent of Schools present for discussion, then submission of the approved document to the Board

*These activities took place prior to the 1979-80 school year.

f. Campaign to Oppose the Renovation of a Local Plant

- parents perceived the renovation as posing a safety hazard for children due to increased traffic flow
- committee sent a representative to visit the planning department, have sent letters of protest to the municipal government and have had police monitor traffic to see if a stop light could be put in
- parents have pursued this project over six-month period because of common interest in childrens' safety

g. Fun Fair*

- event was sponsored by the S.C.C. to raise money
- was successful due to chairperson's organizing ability, contacts with parents in the community and good working relationship with the principal
- the principal was receptive and supportive
- the affair was attractive to parents because the whole family could participate

h. Dance and Demonstration by Students*

- a fund-raising event
- good turnout of parents to see their children perform various dances
- success in organizing attributed to 1) assigning specific tasks to volunteers, 2) pairing a new with an old committee member for some tasks

i. Fun Fair*

- successful due to participation of many parents (about 40) in planning and running events
- an ad hoc committee was formed to do actual planning
- idea was suggested by principal and principal was involved in planning and organization

Areas of Difficulty

1. *Other than in actually setting up the S.C.C., what problems or difficulties have been encountered?*

- getting parents out to meetings--number of families with two parents working, number of single parent families, cultural differences, language difficulties, lack of interest and satisfaction with the school system were cited as reasons (this problem was mentioned in six schools)
- group does not initiate projects, takes lead from principal (a problem in six schools)
- difficulty getting someone to be chairperson (had been a problem in three schools)

---

*These activities took place prior to the 1979-80 school year.

1. *Cont'd*

   - lack of experience, confidence of chairperson (had been a problem in three schools)
   - parents reluctant to commit themselves to projects (a problem in three schools)
   - disagreement over intended functions (this was a problem in one school--some parents felt group should have more power)

2. *Have there been activities that did not work? Describe one.*

   - parent response not too enthusiastic when asked to draft a school philosophy for submission to the Board for consideration in assigning a principal
   - evening activities occasionally not well-attended

3. *Why was the activity not successful?*

   - parents not interested
   - difficulty finding a suitable night for activities that are going to end late

General Questions

1. *What factors contribute to the success of the S.C.C.?*

   - parents feel welcome, comfortable
   - principal and staff meet parents as equals, do not talk down to parents or talk jargon
   - parents respect and trust administration and staff, feel that principal and staff are genuinely concerned about their children, feel that they can get honest answers to their questions
   - perception of parents that they are listened to and can influence decision-making
   - open communication policy of school/availability of staff
   - school philosophy which enhances a team approach to education--the school and family a working team
   - topics of interest presented
   - parents want to have their role clearly defined
   - best when group works closely with the school
   - helps if parents are confident, know how to organize, know what their views are, have a commitment to the school, have an interest in children, are willing and able to take part
   - helps if people in the group know each other well, have worked together in other activities
   - communication links important--formal (newsletters, notices of meetings, sending out minutes, telephone, questionnaires) and informal (ongoing contact between principal and chairperson, chairperson and parents)
   - important that chairperson keep group from personal level
   - important to convey the message to ethnic groups that the school wants to hear parents' opinions and that poor English does not matter

- important to have well-run meetings--should be short and to the point--important that chairperson be able to control and direct meetings effectively
- informality in meetings is important
- important that group is supportive of members who do not speak English well
- discussions should be open, all members should have an opportunity to have a say
- focus on children and the school not on heavy district issues
- keep organization simple if members worry about time commitment
- important to avoid conflict/confrontation over issues
- continual and ongoing system of enlisting members--parents invited to volunteer, members invite others to meetings and inform them of activities
- involvement of individuals as volunteers in the school often leads to interest in and involvement with the S.C.C.
- support of teachers in getting parents interested is important
- flexibility of guidelines allows for different ways of setting up committee
- choose chairperson in April in order to have continuity through to Fall
- hold elections in Fall, not Spring

2. *What suggestions do you have for improving the effectiveness of S.C.C.'s?*

To get parents more interested in the school and feeling more comfortable:

- ask for volunteers for assistance with specific tasks (e.g., helping on field trips)
- if there are more volunteers than are needed, don't turn them away, ask them to participate in another activity, name a specific activity and date
- important that staff feel comfortable with this, principal can help staff to appreciate benefits of volunteer assistance
- invite parents to see childrens' work, to watch a class in session
- have a coffee get together or wine and cheese party to break down formality, communication barriers
- don't set goals too high, re functions--some reluctance at first by parents who are unsure of themselves--important for principal to set realistic goals, encourage parents, don't allow them to fail or feel they have failed
- parents will come out to discuss a particular issue they feel strongly about

To deal with conflict:

- chairperson can monitor discussion and be sensitive to issues to avoid problems in the S.C.C. meeting

General organization:

- workshops to help chairpersons
- more money for mailings
- workshops for principals to become more effective in dealing with S.C.C.'s

2. *Cont'd*

General organization:

- continue "Information Forum"
- workshop held in 1978-79 for all S.C.C. members was helpful
- get information to S.C.C. at beginning of year
- Goldmine Kit great
- have more people like Sue Murphy available to provide a source of communication between S.C.C.'s and the Board--perhaps Coordinating Council could play this role
- allow latitude in S.C.C. guidelines as what works at one school may not be appropriate at another
- basic weakness of guidelines is that school administrator or staff member cannot be chairperson

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS' RESPONSES - D. CUPIT[18]

1. To what can the success in establishing the S.C.C. be attributed?

- full backing of principal and teachers
- work of a few interested, dependable parents
- PTA already flourishing - provided a core group of parents with ongoing activities
- major issue created a need for action (safety issue, playground)
- articulate parents
- parents freely volunteer, willing to devote time and energy
- offshoot of consultative approach developing in the district
- support of administration, commitment of principal
- interested, committed parents

2. What difficulties were encountered in setting up the S.C.C.?

- getting parents involved, getting people to turn out to meetings
- getting someone to be chairperson
- must be careful to avoid cliques - make sure there is a cross section to contribute opinion - advertise issues - constant communication
- parents feel staff are experts, not anxious to be involved unless there is an issue relating directly to their children
- large proportion of E.S.L. parents - difficult to get them involved
- problem of changing role from fund-raising to advisory - some parents quit, new members joined
- getting used to discussing sensitive issues
- lack of information from school to parents re reasons for S.C.C.
- more enthusiasm, more communication done properly is required

3. Is it felt that the opinions expressed or aims pursued by the committee are representative of the feelings of the community as a whole?

- in general, yes
- depends on the issue; varies by issue
- group gets positive feedback from parents who don't attend meetings but are appreciative of efforts of S.C.C.
- sometimes little feedback - language problems, communication difficulties a factor
- feedback good over major issues
- interest groups are represented
- difficult to assess
- sometimes a split between parents and rest of community
- some problems drawing out ethnic groups

---

18. This summary consists of the responses made by the principal, the chairperson and one other committee member in each of the five schools in which interviews were conducted.

4. (a) *Has there been any communication between the committee and the V.S.B.?*

- communications from V.S.B. are well received and utilized
- V.S.B. communications provide topics of discussion
- otherwise only communication when problems arose - letters, petitions, delegations sent to V.S.B. from S.C.C.
- would like to see parent education programs continued, Mount Pleasant Information Forum was good
- have had V.S.B. consultants, officials to S.C.C. meetings
- no communication to V.S.B. (one school) but communications from V.S.B. have been received

(b) *If yes, has this communication been satisfactory?*

- yes
- good rapport
- V.S.B. to S.C.C. interesting, helpful
- S.C.C. to V.S.B. acknowledged, no special action
- some dissatisfaction with trustee - parents felt he did not listen
- in general, good rapport, satisfactory communications
- efforts of Sue Murphy, Chuck Gosbee valuable and appreciated, communications good, open
- delegation to Board did not result in desired action

(c) *If not, how might this communication be improved?*

- important that trustees are approachable
- a system of regular forms by means of which S.C.C.'s could express concerns to/ask for assistance from V.S.B.

5. *What do members feel is the role of the S.C.C. in terms of the educational decision-making process in the school?*

- parents view staff as experts re technical aspects/curriculum
- S.C.C. can have input re manners, behaviour, ethics
- S.C.C. can be aware of programs and have some input, advisory role only re curriculum
- liaison, mention problems that have not been resolved
- present parent concerns relevant to whole school
- should have an input re educational philosophy, type of program
- should be advisory to the local school, a process by which parents can voice opinions
- should be to state parental priorities but <u>not</u> to make decisions
- to become aware of programs, have positive input before decisions are made

6. *What role does the committee actually play in the decision-making process (i.e., what power does the group have?)?*

- opinions do go to staff
- could be a political role if an issue arose - parents could support staff, parents might have some clout with Board
- saw a danger, however, in becoming a political power group because of possibility of misinterpretation and not being representative of whole parent community

6. *Cont'd*

- S.C.C. acts as advisory and in a small way can effect change
- fund-raising, helping set up new programs and projects
- not much power, advisory input
- parents do not initiate, but react to ideas, issues that are presented
- not playing any role, no power

7. *What does the chairperson feel is his role?*

- setting up meeting and agenda
- meet with principal to prepare agenda
- attending some V.S.B. meetings - disseminating information
- chair the meetings
- keep meeting lively, not boring
- know background information, read V.S.B. communications, bring information to parents
- bringing in experts, with help of staff
- getting parents involved
- liaison between parents and staff, channel enquiries from parents
- make sure that decisions made are followed
- liaison between parents and V.S.B.

8. *What does the chairperson feel is the principal's/vice-principal's role?*

- principal makes sure S.C.C. has accurate information, is interpreting things correctly
- help interpret messages, letters from V.S.B.
- keeping S.C.C. informed of events and needs of the school
- answer questions, provide information
- give input to meetings
- make parents aware of problems occurring in the school neighbourhood
- a facilitator, encourage parents to lead
- a key resource person, not dominant at meeting
- periodic reports to committee
- coordinate special speakers, etc.
- a liaison between parents and teachers
- provides stimulus for getting committee going
- getting teachers to become involved, to share information re teaching, etc.
- keep the group on track

9. (a) *Are the members in agreement regarding the committee's aims?*

- generally a consensus

(b) *If yes, what are the major aims?*

- to be aware of school's program
- become better parents, better at assisting children
- assist with regular program through fund-raising
- assist with financial needs to provide programs such as outdoor education, drama, etc. that Board budget does not cover
- make sure school has enough personnel to safely and effectively carry out on programs, e.g., library, block parents; provide a workforce to supply school needs

9. (b) *Cont'd*

- promote school philosophy
- act in advisory capacity to school
- be a sounding board for ideas
- provide a vehicle for parent voice, keep administration aware of community needs, desires
- provide liaison between parents and the Board
- maintain communications between parents and staff and parents and V.S.B.
- see that school is involved in discussions relating to planned changes
- to exercise political clout with Board re changes desired by staff and/or parents
- see that a well-balanced program is maintained; a balance between providing for academic, moral and physical needs of children
- see that programs are provided for <u>all</u> children, including those with special needs
- ease the way to make parents feel welcome to come to school, find out what is going on and share concerns
- provide a workforce to provide school needs

(c) *If no, what are the issues about which members disagree?*

- some disagreement over issue re Lord's Prayer

10. *Do all members participate in putting forward ideas or is there one person who generally does this?*

- everyone speaks out
- more vocal if a major issue
- quiet members drawn in by skilful chairperson
- must be encouraged by principal, keep ideas in the open

11. *Was there an activity that was particularly successful? Why was it successful?*

a. Outdoor education project

- parents saw a need for the program
- the staff suggested it, presented the idea well
- S.C.C. organized the fund-raising aspect
- project had full support of staff
- parents worked hard, all contributed

b. Pot Luck dinner

- well organized
- well supported by staff and parents
- social aspect appealed to parents
- appealed to pride in national heritage

c. S.C.C. workshop

- parents interested at outset
- parents organized it
- expertise of parents, knowing how to organize helped
- parents designed a questionnaire for evaluation of the workshop
- all felt they had learned

11. *Cont'd*

d. Block parents' program

- parents and children were made aware of need
- it was set up in a responsible manner to deal with problem

e. Adventure playground

- received wide support from parents and staff
- need was seen
- committee members put forth effort, used skills to drum up support
- students were involved - built models in the classroom
- strong parent leadership
- energetic effort - fund-raising, newsletters, etc.

f. Relocation of special class

- parents felt location across from kindergarten was inappropriate
- parents made representation to the Board

g. Hamburger day

- parents cooperate by providing labour and money to kids

h. French language proposal

- parents wanted to keep school English-speaking
- parents raised concern, whole community became involved, gave freely of time, energy, expertise
- a telephone committee enlisted help
- parents attended Board meetings, had Board members attend S.C.C. meetings
- campaign was well-organized, had clear-cut goals, good leadership, good participation
- back up demands with accurate, solid data
- a census of neighbourhood was taken to determine language backgrounds in area
- results of census decided issue

12. (a) *Other than in actually setting up the S.C.C., what problems or difficulties have been encountered?*

- regular meeting attendance (no problem major events)
- parent apathy re academic program, good turnout if children are involved in a demonstration or performance
- special programs not always well-attended
- danger of political power groups
- language problems - parents reluctant to come and express opinions - multicultural translators used
- getting information from staff, getting participation from staff
- parents made to feel outsiders, not part of school

12. (b) *Have there been problems in getting the group to "take charge"?*

- once tasks given, no problem
- initially some hesitation, lack of confidence until one person takes charge
- always someone to help from core groups of parents that usually turn out
- help usually available on request

(c) *Have there been problems in focusing the group's attention on "intended functions"?*

- no problems

13. *Have there been activities that did not work? Describe one.*

- plans for an adventure playground fell through due to split in parent opinion between annex and main school
- a representation made to Board did not bring desired results
- sometimes poor turnout to information programs
- committee attempted to have warning stop signs erected, petition to city hall did not bring desired result, parents did not pursue issue further

14. *Why was the activity not successful?*

- parents did not persist in attempt re warning stop signsdue to lack of enthusiasm to mount a campaign

15. *What general comments or observations would you like to make regarding the S.C.C.?*

Value of S.C.C.

- S.C.C.'s important, should be open to all
- S.C.C. concept good but should not function instead of a service group - need for both
- a forum for parents
- important as an advisory group, some political use
- a base or source for action
- provides liaison between V.S.B. and parents, teachers and parents
- an information source for parents shy about approaching the school directly
- provides a service to the school by raising funds for programs not otherwise available
- a social outing for some parents
- important to have a good communication system between school and parents

Factors in Success of S.C.C.

- crucial that principal have a positive attitude
- staff pick up principal's attitude, principal can get staff involved
- principal must agree with the concept, role of the S.C.C.'s and enthusiastically support it

15. *Cont'd*

Factors in Success of S.C.C.

- impetus must come from principal
- principal plays key role of providing information to the group
- important to have a strong, enthusiastic chairperson, someone who listens and does not push own opinion exclusively
- a pleasant informal atmosphere in meetings
- staff mingles informally, do not run meetings
- a mix of parents of both sexes provides a balance in meetings
- everyone must have a chance to speak
- skilful running of meetings
- must provide topics of interest to parents
- principal has good rapport with parents
- principal must channel enthusiasm in constructive directions
- S.C.C. members should be well-informed of V.S.B. or school policies
- S.C.C. must have opportunity for real input, parents must feel they are playing a useful role and that their views will be considered in decision-making
- organization of issues important - an example of success in dealing with major issues: when an issue comes up it is tabled to the next meeting, invitation is extended to all parents to be involved, issue is discussed at next meeting. This process provides time for people to think out issues and prepare a response; parents feel they have real input
- problems can be dealt with effectively by S.C.C. going to principal before an issue becomes too hot
- one school found it effective to have two groups - a "thinking" group to discuss issues, raise matters of concern and a "working" group to provide volunteers for school activities and raise funds
- V.S.B. should promote positive features of S.C.C. especially in schools where the S.C.C. is not functioning well

APPENDIX C

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

VANCOUVER
SCHOOL
BOARD

1595 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1Z8

SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

PURPOSE

The purpose of the School Consultative Committee is to promote the free exchange of ideas between principal, staff, students and parents relating to school programs and policies. The School Consultative Committee provides for the principal an opportunity to consult persons who are affected by the decisions taken in school. The School Consultative Committee, as an advisory body, can examine the educational philosophies and policies of both provincial and local authorities and have the opportunity to suggest alternatives.

ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

Ad Hoc School Consultative Committee

The ad hoc committee could be an existing parents committee. Its function will be to organize the establishment of a regular School Consultative Committee.

The Regular School Consultative Committee

The regular School Consultative Committee should be elected soon after the opening of school in September.

- *The size of the School Consultative Committee*

  Ten to fifteen members has proven to be a workable size for a Committee.

- *Parent Members*

  Parents must be elected at a school meeting called for this purpose. (The election may be combined with another school activity.)

- *Administrative Representation*

  The principal or vice-principal of the school will be a member of the Committee.

- *Staff Representative*

  The staff representative will be appointed by the Staff Council (Committee).

- *Student Representative*

  The student representative will be appointed by the Student Council. A student representative will be optional for Elementary School Consultative Committees.

GUIDELINES FOR THE SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

- *The Chairperson of the School Consultative Committee shall be a parent.*
- *The School Consultative Committee minutes shall contain recommendations made. Members of the Committee who disagree with any recommendations shall, if they wish, have their opposition recorded.*
- *The School Consultative Committee shall not discuss individual school personnel or individual students.*
- *Meetings of each School Consultative Committee will be open to all parents of students attending that school.*

FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The School Consultative Committee provides the opportunity to:

- *Present suggestions in respect to the learning experiences for which the school is responsible.*
- *Recommend changes that are perceived to be desirable in respect to school policy or procedures.*
- *Assist in evaluating innovative programs and procedures introduced in the school.*
- *Assist people wishing to make enquiries in order that they may obtain information about processes and procedures affecting their children.*
- *Contribute to a sense of community within a school neighbourhood.*
- *Be informed of events that affect the educational program in the school.*

- *Recommend on alterations and renovations.*
- *Advise on adult activities at the school.*
- *Review curriculum to obtain an understanding of school programs.*
- *Recommend a code of student conduct.*
- *Assist in establishing program priorities.*
- *Advise on the utilization of community agencies such as the Park Board, YWCA, City Council.*
- *Cooperate in establishing programs for parents through which they may become informed of the developments within the school.*
- *Become involved in the development of educational and organizational programs such as:*
  - *programming events which can enhance the learning opportunities for both children and parents*
  - *advise on means to ensure racial and cultural understanding within the school neighbourhood*
  - *assist in ensuring that the safest possible environment in respect to the children's physical well-being is maintained in the neighbourhood*
  - *assist in establishing program priorities*
- *It is expected that, after a School Consultative Committee has convened to discuss some or all of the above items, it will be better prepared to discuss the philosophy of the school. This philosophy could be presented to the Vancouver School Board for consideration in the assigning of principals to individual schools.*

EXISTING PARENT COMMITTEES

Existing parent committees will be permitted to assume the role of the School Consultative Committee provided that:

- *the principal or vice-principal is a member*
- *a teacher is a member*
- *members are elected*
- *functions are similar to those of School Consultative Committees*

VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- *Support consultative committees by providing School Board personnel to assist parents and staff to understand educational developments within the Vancouver system and any other assistance that may promote and support School Consultative Committees.*

- *Assist committees through training and related resources to work more effectively.*

- *Provide nominal financial assistance to the Committee to help defray expenses such as:*

  - *incidental mailing costs*
  - *stationery*
  - *publications of newsletters*

- *Evaluate the progress of the School Consultative Committees in cooperation with all parties involved approximately one year after committees are formed.*

September, 1975